

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5-17, 19, 21-30, 32, 34-41, and 44-48 are pending in the present application. In the Final Office Action mailed September 22, 2005, the Examiner took the following action: (1) rejected claims 1, 3, 5-6, 8-17, 19, 21-30, 32, 34, 36-41, 44-45, and 47-48 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Dallmann (U.S. 5,322,244); and (2) rejected claims 1, 3, 5-17, 19, 21-30, 32, 34-41, and 44-48 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Courter (U.S. 4,875,645). Applicants respectfully request entry of the above-proposed amendment, and respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 1, 3, 5-16

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the subject matter taught, in one particular embodiment, in Figures 8 and 9 of Applicants' application. More specifically, as amended, claim 1 recites a payload assembly adapted to be secured to a support structure having a plurality of elongated, spaced apart supports, comprising: *a payload member having a substantially flat portion adapted to be positioned proximate the support structure, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*; at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and adapted to span between an adjacent pair of elongated supports of the support structure, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions that are adapted to engage with a top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated supports, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion*, the at least one payload support being adapted to beam loads from the payload member to the adjacent pair of elongated supports, the at least one payload support further being adapted to be disengagable from the adjacent pair

of elongated supports and moveable with the payload member relative to the support structure.
(emphasis added).

Dallman (U.S. 5,322,244)

As best shown in Figure 6 of Dallman, Dallman teaches a supply system for passenger aircraft that includes a supply trolley 27 coupled to a support 9, the support 9 in turn being coupled to a pair of elongated rails 13.

Dallman fails to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. More specifically, Dallman fails to teach or fairly suggest a payload assembly that includes *a payload member having a substantially flat portion adapted to be positioned proximate the support structure, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*, and at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and adapted to span between an adjacent pair of elongated supports of the support structure, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions that are adapted to engage with a top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated supports, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.*

More specifically, Dallman fails to teach or fairly suggest at least the following limitations: (1) the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess; (2) the at least one payload support having a first end portion including an offset flat portion; (3) the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports; and (4) the offset flat portion being fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

Courter (U.S. 4,875,645)

As best shown in Figure 3 of Courter, Courter teaches a modular cargo container system for aircraft that includes a payload member 80 having recesses 102, 104, the payload member 80 being coupled to a support 32 that spans elongated supports 12, 20, 22.

Courter fails to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. More specifically, Courter fails to teach or fairly suggest a payload assembly that includes *a payload member having a substantially flat portion adapted to be positioned proximate the support structure, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*, and at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and adapted to span between an adjacent pair of elongated supports of the support structure, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions that are adapted to engage with a top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated supports, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.*

More specifically, Courter fails to teach or fairly suggest at least the following limitations: (1) the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess; (2) the at least one payload support having a first end portion including an offset flat portion; (3) the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports; and (4) the offset flat portion being fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over Dallman and Courter. Claims 3 and 5-16 depend from claim 1 and are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as claim 1 and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims.

Claims 17, 19, 21-29

Similarly, as amended, claim 17 recites an assembly, comprising: a floor assembly including a plurality of elongated engagement members, the engagement members being spaced apart and approximately parallel, each engagement member including a top surface; and a payload assembly including: *a payload member having a substantially flat portion positioned proximate the floor assembly, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*; at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and spanning between an adjacent pair of elongated engagement members, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions coupled to the top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated engagement members, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion*, the payload support being adapted to beam loads from the payload member to the adjacent pair of elongated engagement members, the at least one payload support being further adapted to be decoupled from the adjacent pair of elongated engagement members and moveable with the payload member relative to the floor assembly. (emphasis added).

As described above, Dallman and Courter fail to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the assembly recited in claim 17. More specifically, Dallman and Courter fail to teach or fairly suggest a payload assembly that includes *a payload member having a substantially flat portion adapted to be positioned proximate the support structure, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*, and at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and adapted to span between an adjacent pair of elongated supports of the support structure, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions that are adapted to engage with a top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated supports, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the*

substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

More specifically, Dallman and Courter fail to teach or fairly suggest at least the following limitations: (1) the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess; (2) the at least one payload support having a first end portion including an offset flat portion; (3) the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports; and (4) the offset flat portion being fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is allowable over Dallman and Courter. Claims 19 and 21-29 depend from claim 17 and are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as claim 17 and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims.

Claims 30, 32, 34-39

Similarly, amended claim 30 recites an aircraft, comprising: a fuselage operatively coupled to an airframe; a propulsion system operatively coupled to the airframe; a floor assembly disposed within the fuselage and coupled to the airframe, the floor assembly including a plurality of elongated engagement members coupled to the airframe, the engagement members being spaced apart and approximately parallel, each engagement member including a top surface; and a payload assembly including *a payload member having a substantially flat portion positioned proximate the floor assembly, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*; at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and spanning between an adjacent pair of elongated engagement members, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions coupled to the top surface of each of the adjacent

pair of elongated engagement members, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion*, the payload support being adapted to beam loads from the payload member to the adjacent pair of elongated engagement members, the at least one payload support being further adapted to be decoupled from the adjacent pair of elongated engagement members and moveable with the payload member relative to the floor assembly. (emphasis added).

For the reasons set forth above, Dallman and Courter fail to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the assembly recited in claim 30. More specifically, Dallman and Courter fail to teach or fairly suggest a payload assembly that includes *a payload member having a substantially flat portion adapted to be positioned proximate the support structure, the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*, and at least one payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion and adapted to span between an adjacent pair of elongated supports of the support structure, the at least one payload support having first and second end portions that are adapted to engage with a top surface of each of the adjacent pair of elongated supports, *the first end portion of the payload support including an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the offset flat portion is fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion*.

More specifically, Dallman and Courter fail to teach or fairly suggest at least the following limitations: (1) the substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess; (2) the at least one payload support having a first end portion including an offset flat portion; (3) the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports; and (4) the offset flat portion being

fittingly engaged within the recess and is substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 30 is allowable over Dallman and Courter. Claims 32 and 34-39 depend from claim 30 and are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as claim 30 and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims.

Claims 40-41 and 44-48

Amended claim 40 recites a method of securing a payload to a support structure, comprising: coupling a plurality of elongated engagement members of a floor assembly to the support structure, the engagement members being spaced apart and approximately parallel, each engagement member including an engagement surface; and providing a payload assembly including *a payload member that includes a substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess*, and a payload support coupled to the substantially flat portion, the payload support having first and second end portions and being adapted to span between an adjacent pair of engagement members; removably coupling the first and second end portions of the payload support with an upper surface of each of the adjacent pair of engagement members, *wherein the first end portion of the payload support includes an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the removably coupling includes fittingly engaging the offset flat portion within the recess, the offset flat portion being substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion*; and at least partially transmitting loads from the payload member through the payload support to the adjacent pair of engagement members. (emphasis added).

For the reasons set forth above, Dallman and Courter fail to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the method recited in claim 40. More specifically, Dallman and Courter fail to teach or fairly suggest a method that includes providing a payload assembly including *a payload member*

that includes a substantially flat portion having a lateral edge that includes a recess, and removably coupling the first and second end portions of the payload support with an upper surface of each of the adjacent pair of engagement members, wherein the first end portion of the payload support includes an offset flat portion, the lateral edge of the substantially flat portion being substantially parallel with and adjacent to a corresponding one of the elongated supports such that the removably coupling includes fittingly engaging the offset flat portion within the recess, the offset flat portion being substantially co-planar with the substantially flat portion.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 40 is allowable over Dallman and Courter. Claims 41 and 44-48 depend from claim 40 and are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as claim 40 and also due to additional limitations recited in those claims.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 5-17, 19, 21-30, 32, 34-41, and 44-48 are now in condition for allowance. If there are any remaining matters that may be handled by a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this communication is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via first class mail under 37 C.F.R. § 1.08 on the date indicated below addressed to: MAIL STOP AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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